

Ghadar Jari Hai

The Revolt Continues

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Redefining the Harappan Hinterland

History of India-China Interactions

Baji Raut: The Youngest Martyr of India

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Editorial Policy

Ghadar Jari Hai is a platform for discussing Indian solutions to problems facing India. It is focused on understanding Indian history, philosophy and economic, political and other fields of knowledge, without the jaundiced eye of Eurocentrism.

All serious views, of whatever hue, are welcome as long as the author substantiates his or her argument and does not indulge in labeling, name calling and ridicule. We are particularly interested in unraveling pre-British India and the changes brought about through British rule, since the colonial legacy continues to bear great significance for present-day Indian society. We believe that no shade of opinion has a monopoly over the truth and that if we all collaborate in this endeavour, we are quite capable of arriving at insights and solutions to our problems, much as our ancestors did. We seek to publish well researched articles in various fields, which at the same time are communicative and do not indulge in excessive technical jargon.

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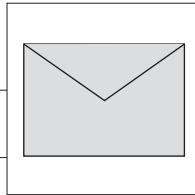
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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I check your website www.ghadar.in regularly. However I do not see frequent updates. Can you send me a mail whenever you update the site? Also you could put in a lot more content in the archives regarding 1857 and other topics from Indian history and philosophy and make it a great resource centre for all of us.

cheers
S Anand
Los Gatos, Ca

Dear Editor,

I have been waiting for the next issue of Ghadar Jari Hai for quite a long time. Hope the problems are being sorted out and it will emerge with renewed vigour. In its short history of three years GJH has provoked us to think differently and all the authors and the editorial team of GJH needs to be congratulated for that. Would like to see micro-studies/short precis of important works from our past. For example: Arthashastra, Ain-e-Akbari, al Berauni's travels, Huen Tsang's travels, Fa Hien's travels etc I would also like to see more profiles like Jewels of India as well as different streams of Indian thought like: Samkhya, Vaisesika, Nyaya, Charvaka-Lokayata, Buddhist and Jain teachings, radical Bhakti thought, etc.

regards
Shankar patil,
Mumbai

Dear Editor,

I thoroughly enjoyed the cover story "relevance of Arthashastra"; it is interesting to note that the concept of reciprocal rights and duties has existed in South Asia for so long. History has been a battle for rights. It is said in the article that Kings who did not follow Raj Dharma and were inconsiderate towards their subjects saw rebellions and unrest. Their kingdoms also didn't last too long. Today, it is not just about a king, there are rebellions and a lot of unrest. One hopes that the wheel of change will turn faster. I also really liked the conversation piece with Prof. C.K Raju. Popularly we know that India's contribution to mathematics was the addition of Zero, which in itself is a massive contribution.

This interview is an eye-opener. I wish you and your team all the very best, hoping that we will get to read more such interesting articles and understand our own past better in a way which motivates us to do better for the future.

It has been some time and I have not seen your latest issue. I hope it is going to come out soon.

Regards
S. Singh, Student
Faridabad, Haryana

Dear Editor,

A friend of mine sent me the Ghadar Jari Magazine recently, titled Relevance of Arthashastra. I really enjoyed reading the magazine and also read the past issues on your website. Having done my B.A. in history at Delhi, I found the articles and the materials presented in your magazine refreshing and focused. It gives me a new perspective on the past, the present and future. I look forward to your next issue. I am glad I got introduced to your magazine.

Devina Nigam,
Bangalore, India

Dear Editor,

Your magazine is doing an excellent job in digging into India's past and bringing out those magnificent contributions that our civilisation has provided the world. I read the "Jewels of India" and "Pages of history" columns in your magazine with particular interest. The portrait that Shivanand Kanavi had drawn on Sarvajnya, the encyclopedic was very interesting. Here was a poet who lived two hundred years prior to the French Enlightenment who used the idiom of poetry to convey his knowledge on a breathtaking array of subjects from agriculture to family life to religion. The translations of his vachanas reveal the poetic skill and the subtle humour of Sarvajnya. Such beautiful accounts of our talented ancestors will add further value to our rich heritage. I request you to give us further insights into our great forefathers in the issues to come.

Saravanan,
Chennai



Editorial

Editorial

Dear readers, we thank you for being patient with us and gently prodding us to overcome difficulties and persist in the difficult task of publishing a serious magazine of high standards.

This issue carries an excellent interview with Madhavi Thampi who teaches in the Department of East Asian Studies of the Delhi University and who has over the years taught Chinese history and language to hundreds of students at the university. India and China are a matter of much curiosity and study among scholars all over the world. Their rise in the first decade of this century is being keenly analysed. However outside a narrow academic circle, very little is known about the relationship between these two ancient civilizations over millennia. This interview uncovers a small part of this relationship regarding exchange of ideas, philosophy, trade and technology from the ancient Buddhist period to the colonial era and would have served its purpose if it provokes the readers to investigate the subject more deeply.

We also carry two important book reviews by D P Agrawal and K Raghavendra Rao. Agrawal has done seminal work in researching history of Indian science and technology and has trained several youngsters to carry the work forward. Irfan Habib is a well known scholar of history of medieval India, who has written a book on Technology in medieval India. We are carrying the entire review, though a bit long, because of the importance of the work and the scholarship of the gentlemen involved.

There has been intense debate in anthropological and indologist circles in the west recently about Hinduism. Wendy Doniger's "The Hindus: An alternative history" has aroused admiration as well as controversy. A reaction is "Invading the Sacred" a collection of articles contesting some of her interpretations and those of other academics as well, written with anger, passion and contestation – K Raghavendra Rao has obliged us by reviewing both.

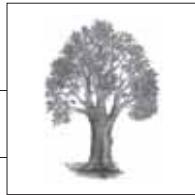
As study material we have reproduced a scholarly piece which throws

light on the fascinating Harappan culture and its geographic extent. Unlike most academic papers this is readable and enlightening even to lay readers.

We also bring to you the story of a young anti-colonial revolutionary, Baji Raut from Odisha.

Surkhraj Kaur has written a short story based on her experience of the stifling atmosphere in our college class rooms.

While presenting this issue in your hands we appeal to you to check out our website frequently. We are paying special attention to uploading content into it so that you would not need to wait three months or more to read the latest. More over clearly our reach increases many fold when we put the content on the World Wide Web. We hope with your contributions to the website www.ghadar.in becomes one of the important internet resources on the Great Ghadar of 1857, on Indian History, Philosophy, Science and Culture to millions of people.



History of India-China Interactions

*In this conversation, **Madhavi Thampi** unravels the history of India-China interactions to **Shivanand Kanavi***

Shivanand Kanavi: What we would like to discuss with you today is the contact between the Indian civilization and the Chinese civilization. What did it lead to? What did they learn from each other? These are two great civilizations that are divided by the Himalayas, but I glanced through a very interesting paper where the author said China and India are united by the Himalayas. We have heard of some names such as Hiuen Tsang and Fa Hien. And we have heard of exchange of knowledge and of the technology of silk production, gun powder, so on and so forth. Can you give a perspective on the interaction of these two civilisations?

Madhavi Thampi: Perspectives on ancient India-China contacts have been dominated by the Buddhist interactions, from about the 1st century CE to about the 10th-11th centuries CE. This is not to say that there were no interactions based on Buddhism after that, but they were no longer the main content of Sino-Indian exchanges. China itself became a centre of Buddhism after that. Still, there is one school which has focused on the Buddhist relationship and tended to not see anything else.

But there is another approach which I think is more contemporary. This

sees that the relationship was much more than that based on Buddhism alone. It ante-dated Buddhism and continued afterwards. It may not have been so culturally significant or uplifting but it is also important in order to establish that there was a continuity of the relations. The debate still goes on, about what really was the character of the India-China relationship in pre-modern times.



Confucius (551 B.C.-478 B.C.)

Source: The Teachers' and Pupils' Cyclopaedia (Kansas City: The Buiton Book Company, 1909)1:401

The first recorded evidence of contact is contained in a story, which has many variations: in the Han period in China, around the 1st century CE, the emperor sent an envoy to what they called the Western Region, in order to form an alliance against the nomadic people who were troubling the Han empire. They wanted to outflank them by going over to the west. When this envoy, Zhang Qian, got there he found some products from China. At that time there were no known trading relations between Bactria (now part of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and, as a smaller part, Turkmenistan. The region was once host to religions like Zoroastrianism and Buddhism—Ed) and China. He recognized them as products of the Sichuan region of China. So he asked where they got these goods from and they said it came through India. So, this shows that there was a trade route from south western China into India through the North East, (from Sichuan to Yunnan region of China, Myanmar, Assam and into India).

This is a story that is recorded in Chinese histories. People have tried to document it in archaeological terms, but not very successfully. But it is still possible that there was this trade route as early as the 1st century B.C.

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The key point here is that probably relations began with trade.

On the other hand, in India we have references to China in the *Arthashastra*, and also in the *Mahabharata* to things like *Cheena patta*—silk. That is taken as evidence that special products of China were known in India. Similarly, the word *cheeni* quite likely originates in the fact that sugar making technology came from China. This is not really my area of expertise, but there are people who have documented these things very carefully.

Very soon, Buddhism became a major factor in Sino-Indian interaction. The connection was not just at the level of ideas; it was also linked to trade and the kind of products that were exchanged between China and India. In the later Han period, two monks were supposed to have come from India. This has also become a legend. There are many stories about how this happened. The most famous story is that the Han emperor had a dream of some deity in the western region and sent his envoys there. He brought back these two monks on white horses carrying a lot of Buddhist scriptures. He made a monastery for them which is known today as the ‘white horse monastery’. The Indian government today is rebuilding a white horse monastery in the city of Luoyang, the old Han capital of China.

SK: Many scholars refer a lot to Buddhist scriptures preserved in Tibetan language.

MT: That could be, and it could also be a different kind of Buddhism. From the 1st to 4th century CE, the main problem was of transla-

tion. Appropriate techniques had not been developed. It was not just that the two cultures and value systems were different, as you know, the whole script is different. The Chinese script is ideographic so you cannot just spell out things and leave it like that. Even more difficult than the script was dealing with an entirely different set of concepts. The indigenous Chinese philosophical and ethical concepts were a far cry from Indian philosophical concepts. If the idea itself did not exist in China, how do you find the matching word to translate it? After the first two monks, more and more started to come from India. The one to crack the translation technique was Kumarajiva, a monk. He was not actually an Indian; he came from Kucha, one of the oasis states from the region of Chinese Central Asia known today as Xinjiang. The fact is that Buddhism did not really go to China directly from India. It came through intermediary states. Each of these oases was a little principality or state that thrived mainly on trade, on what came to be known as the silk route. Thus, Buddhism spread especially from Kashmir, which was a big centre of Buddhism, into Central Asia. From there it went on into China. Of course there were monks who went straight from India to China also.

SK: Were these monks representing any royalty or state?

MT: From the Chinese side you often had pilgrims being sent by the ruler. Hiuen Tsang himself went without the permission of the Tang emperor, which was a risky thing to do. However, he was pardoned for this lapse after he came back to China! From the Indian side they mainly came on

their own, probably with the encouragement of their own sect. Generally when these Indian monks came, they were well received by the Chinese rulers and were set up in monasteries, given a place and support for translations etc. Kumarajiva’s translations were supposed to have filled a whole room!

Buddhism came into China during the period of the unified empire. However, after the fall of the Han dynasty, there were a series of nomadic incursions into north China. China broke up into different states, and a kind of north-south divide came into being in China. The northern principalities were much more of a mix, a hybrid of the Chinese and nomadic cultures, while the culture in the south was more like the original Chinese. Still Buddhism continued to flourish in this period on both sides. This is considered the period when it is said to have really spread among all strata of the population.

SK: What attracted Chinese to Buddhism, when they already had Taoism and Confucianism?

MT: Definitely the principal philosophical system was Confucianism, but it was associated with the unified, imperial state from the Han period. It was a doctrine that prioritised service to the emperor and to the state. The collapse of the Han empire, roughly contemporaneous with the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe, was a traumatic development that naturally affected the credibility of Confucianism itself.

SK: Can we say that Confucianism was more of a social and ethical philosophy than spiritual?

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MT: Exactly, it had very little to do with spirituality. For example there is this famous passage in the *Analects* of Confucius when a disciple asked him about his views on God and he said that he didn't know anything about it! So, the whole question of the afterlife and God, while not denied outright, was hardly addressed. In a period of great political anarchy and chaos and a lot of violence, when there were a series of repeated raids and incursions from outside China, it was hard to adhere to a philosophy which said that one's primary objective should be to develop the quality of being a good official. Whom are you going to serve? It was in this period that issues of suffering and of the meaning of life and death, which Buddhism addressed, would have preoccupied people's minds more. In the south, Buddhism addressed many of the spiritual questions of people who had been dislocated and uprooted in the great waves of migration to the south that followed the nomadic incursions into the north. In the north, where the rulers were fully or semi nomadic, they were particularly receptive to Buddhism because it was a foreign religion. In China, the bodhisattva concept particularly was very attractive, because it stood for the one who postpones his own salvation for the sake of saving the people. So, you have Indian bodhisattvas getting transposed into the Chinese system changing their names and forms. For instance the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara took the form of a woman, a goddess in China called Guan Yin (representing compassion, mercy).

Generally speaking, the way Chinese have practiced their religion, it has never been exclusive. They can follow different belief systems at the same

time, that's not a problem for them.

At this time the Tantric form of Buddhism developed in Tibet. It didn't spread much in China. China also developed its own schools of Buddhism, one is very well known, and it is called Chan, from the Sanskrit word Dhyana, meditation, which in Japan is known as Zen.

Here I want to mention something that the Chinese did, which is very much part of the Chinese genius. At different times different things were attributed to the Buddha. Some of them were almost contradictory with each other. This was quite confusing to the Chinese. So, one of their sects, Tian Tai, systematized and categorized the teachings of Buddha according to certain periods in his life and certain stages in his enlightenment. Once they had done this, they were able to accept the variations.

SK: Did the early teachings of Buddha have more of an influence on the Chinese rather than the later Madhyamika schools?

MT: By and large the later form of Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, had a greater influence on China

In China, the bodhisattva concept particularly was very attractive, because it stood for the one who postpones his own salvation for the sake of saving the people.

than the Hinayana. After the reunification of China in the later 6th century CE, the Tang period (7th to 10th centuries) is considered the high watermark of Buddhism in China. Despite Confucianism making a comeback, the Tang rulers were also patrons of Buddhism. This again shows the eclectic nature of the Chinese tradition. In this period, the Buddhist sangha became very strong. The only time you could talk of real persecution of Buddhism in China was in this period. But it was not like the Inquisition in Europe where it was an ideological persecution. In China, the emperors would either close down the monasteries or reduce their size in order to reduce their power. Though the Tang emperors favored Buddhism as a religion, they did not like anything that challenged the power of their state. They always wanted the right to control some of the appointments in the sangha. They would sometimes leave them alone. But they never gave up that right to control.

Many of the Chinese pilgrims spent a lot of time in India and went back. The Chinese came, collected the materials, learnt the doctrines and went back to China. But the Indian monks who went to China rarely came back. They mostly stayed there doing translation and teaching. So, the aim of both was basically the same, to take the doctrine there. They went by sea or by the land route through mountains and deserts. However, the sea route was no less dangerous. Generally speaking, sea routes became dominant after about 8th-9th century CE

We have two excellent scholarly works on Sino-Indian interactions

in the pre-modern period. One is by a Chinese scholar, Liu Xinru; she had studied Sino-Indian exchanges in the 1st to the 7th or 8th centuries CE, which is really the Buddhist phase. She showed how the trade in this period was very much linked with the products required for use in the practice of religion. The other work by an Indian scholar, Tansen Sen picks up from where Liu Xinru leaves off. He has shown that Sino-Indian relations didn't decline with the decline of Buddhism in India, but continued vigorously even after on the basis of trade, especially from 11th-12th century onwards. Relations based on Buddhism did not die out. In fact, monks and pilgrims continued to go back and forth, but the doctrinal inputs from India were no longer vital to Chinese Buddhism.

This kind of work is really important to establish what continued and what did not continue in Sino-Indian relations. Otherwise, there has been this pervasive view that because Buddhism declined in India, relations with China declined; and then next thing one jumps to the 20th century, and what happened in between is just left out!

SK: I saw a reference that in Tipu Sultan's time that there was an emissary from China, which led to the establishment of sericulture in Mysore.

MT: New research is showing the importance of trade in this period. We know that in the nineteenth century, painters and artists from China also were present in the court of Mysore and other princely states.

SK: The so called xenophobia of the Chinese, is there some truth to it?

Xenophobia is an invention of the Westerners. China has been very much open to other societies and cultures, even while they always had a high sense of self worth

MT: I think this xenophobia is an invention of the Westerners. China has been very much open to other societies and cultures, even while they always had a high sense of self worth. They never thought of themselves as inferior and they were not xenophobic either. It has been seen that they were open to Buddhism coming from India. Of course, few cultures around them could be compared to the Chinese civilization. The only thing comparable was the Indian civilization, and where they could learn something from it, they did so. Only a very secure civilization can be like that. At the same time the Chinese have their own terms and words for people who are non-Chinese, who don't have the same culture as them. The western way of translating all those terms is the single word – barbarian. But actually it means someone who is not culturally like them. They didn't have just one term for foreigners in China, they had several, depending on where they came from. As for India, they had much more respectful terms. Once Buddhism went there, India became the Heavenly Kingdom in the West for them.

The way we look at China today is unfortunately colored by 19th and 20th

century western historiography.

SK: Tell us something about technological exchanges between the two countries

MT: Apart from possible transmission of things like sugar-making and sericulture in the ancient period, the Song period in China (10th to 13th century) saw several great inventions: printing, the compass, gunpowder, etc. We don't know exactly if they were transmitted to India, but we know that there was a great increase of Chinese navigation in the waters of South East Asia and the Indian Ocean for some centuries after that. There were flourishing sea ports on the southern and south eastern coasts, some of which had whole colonies of foreign traders. The port of Quanzhou in the 14th century had a colony of Indians living there. Archaeological remains of Saivite temples with Tamil inscriptions have been found there. The Chola rulers had relations with Song China. So the Chinese had some knowledge of places in India, and there are detailed accounts by them about Malabar, Kanchivaram and such places.

The Song empire was defeated by the Mongols. For a land based people, the Mongols were very open to maritime trade. But the high watermark of China's venture into the Indian Ocean was in the early 15th century. The Ming ruler at that time launched several huge maritime expeditions which went all the way from the Chinese coast into the South East Asian waters, through the Malacca Straits, touching various ports along the Indian peninsula and going right across the Indian Ocean as far as East Africa. These

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were the expeditions commanded by Admiral Zheng He. Each ship – and there were dozens on each voyage – carried 2000-3000 men and weaponry, and the tonnage exceeded anything floating on the sea at that time. Historians are still debating about the purpose. It wasn't really necessary to send expeditions like that for trade alone. And there were at least 5 major expeditions between 1405 and 1433. There are Chinese records of this expedition and what they saw, including the economy, government and culture of the places they visited. Of course, it is from their own perspective, but these are surprisingly detailed accounts.

In the pre-modern period, I would say this was one of the last major dramatic encounters between China and India.

SK: Where did they touch India?

MT: The whole peninsular region, including the Malabar Coast and the east coast, as well as Sri Lanka.

SK: I wonder if they had any other contact with Kerala. Around the same time some extraordinary mathematical treatises were written in Kerala, and these relate to calculus related to navigation. This is actually calculus which was developed in India and is now being called the Kerala School of Mathematics. This precedes Newton by 200 years. They have also now found navigational instruments linked to this. Whether the Chinese knew about it we don't know. But they say Vasco Da Gama was lost and in Madagascar he found an Indian, (they just called him a dark man), who then guided him to the coast of Kerala.

MT: They may have learnt from each other. It may not have been from just one expedition, but they did have contacts.

SK: It is interesting that the European expeditions were state funded, even stock market funded, because they were looking for things they didn't have. However, China is said to have claimed at one point that they had nothing they wanted from Europe or elsewhere. So unless it is purely for exploratory reasons, or for purely vain or egoistic reasons on the part of the ruler, why would they send such huge expeditions?

MT: The jury is still out on this. People go on discussing this – what was really the motive. But we do know that the whole venture suddenly stopped. The later Ming rulers started to follow a policy of seclusion. About this also, we don't know why exactly. Various reasons are given – financial or other reasons. That was the last major effort of the Chinese to come out of their own part of the world and be adventurous in maritime terms, but trade still continued. The goods came in Chinese ships thereafter only up to South East Asia and were exchanged there, in places like Malacca and other points.

Meanwhile there is a completely different aspect of Sino-Indian interactions, with Indian merchants who went into the region of western China and Central Asia. There was a small yet very widespread Indian merchant diaspora which in the Mughal period went as far as Iran, Russia, Chinese Turkistan, Afghanistan, etc. Thus, when you talk of China-India relations in the later period, you can't talk of only the sea contacts. For centuries, Indian mer-

chants, traders and money-lenders were going there – mainly from Punjab, Sind and Kashmir. There were several routes. There was also trade with Tibet from Kashmir. Places like Leh were points at which goods were exchanged, also Yarkand in Chinese Turkestan (today's Xinjiang) was one place where Indian traders went with their goods. Basically there is no point of discontinuity, no point at which they stopped contact.

SK: Which also means that they didn't see each other as threats?

MT: I don't think that they ever viewed each other as a threat. Remember, for much of the time after the 10th century, there were various states in India and not only one big empire.

SK: What did they call India? West Asians called it Hindustan or the land East of the Sindhu (Indus).

MT: Actually in the earlier Buddhist period they gave names like 'Heavenly Land to the West', 'Heavenly Bamboo', or the 'western region'. This word 'Yindu', which is the current name in Chinese for India, was given during the Tang period, may be because of the Arabs calling it Indu. Chinese accounts in the 19th century about India are very vague. They start knowing about places called Bombay or Madras, but you can see that initially they don't know exactly where it is. There are even references to the "five Indias"!

The Chinese tradition of writing about foreign peoples was like this. After someone wrote something – like this official in the Song period who compiled a work based on the accounts of foreign traders in

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Quanzhou -- that account gets repeated in subsequent works many times, till another person comes along who has some original material, like those who went on the great Ming expeditions. This becomes a new set of data, and then that version would get repeated again and again. In the 19th century they found that they had to find out again about India. With the arrival of the British in China and the trade in opium from India, again they wanted to know about India, mainly coming out of wanting to know what the British were up to. They updated their information about India in this period largely from Western accounts.

So, the point is that the image of India in China is not one. The image of India keeps changing.

SK: How did European colonialism in Asia affect this?

MT: There was a substantial change in the relationship. India got caught up in the trade of Britain and European countries with China, which was driven by the ever increasing demand for tea. Britain started looking unsuccessfully for things it could sell China in exchange for tea. Then they realized that whereas there was not much that they could sell directly to China, India had items the Chinese wanted.

First they realised that there was a market for raw cotton from India in China. Thus the cotton trade took off in a big way. Then, when the cotton trade started to stagnate in the 2nd decade of the 19th century, the British took to pushing opium in a big way.

SK: I thought the growth of cotton in India started only after the American civil war.

MT: It was much earlier. Indian textiles were a big commodity in the intra-Asian trade in the early period. But from the late 18th century raw cotton from India going directly to China became the mainstay of that trade. Then opium starts to figure in a big way. Opium was exported to China for a long time, but it did not become a big item till about 1820s. Earlier it was imported mainly for medicinal purposes and in small quantities. There were only say 2000 chests imported into China a year. But from the 1820s it becomes more than 20,000 and then later, 40,000 chests. Unlike cotton, opium is a self expanding commodity because the more you get addicted the more you need it. The import as well as the sale and production of opium were banned in China. So, the British East India Company would grow the opium in India, and it would be sold under license to private traders who would smuggle it to China. BEIC having a monopoly over the trade with China at Canton didn't want to be caught carrying the opium. This way both made profits. That was Patna opium grown in the Bengal Presidency. Then they started selling Malwa opium, whose outlet was Bombay, which was cheaper than Patna opium. So the sales went up in a big way. Unlike Patna opium it was not grown under BEIC licence, but was grown in the interior regions and brought to Bombay by private British and Indian traders. By the 1830's the opium imports started to affect the whole society in China. At one point about 80 to 90% of their armed forces and their

bureaucracy was addicted. From having a favourable balance of trade with Britain, China started to pay massive quantities of silver to pay for the opium. That affected the currency rate, taxation procedures, and so on.

The British went to war in 1839 when the Chinese finally tried to enforce the ban on the opium trade. The Chinese were defeated and that begins the whole era of uneven treaties and repeated humiliation of China that lasted for more than 100 years. So India became in an instrument for British economic and political domination of China. Indian soldiers and policemen were also used by the British and Europeans for nearly one century in China.

SK: That phase of conflict between Britain and China in which Indians also played a role as opium traders and soldiers, is that what started creating a negative image of India as a tool of British imperialism among the Chinese?

MT: Exactly, plus the Chinese were well aware of what had happened to India at the hands of the British. They knew that Indians had lost their independence and been conquered.

SK: Did they follow the Ghadar of 1857?

MT: They knew what was going on. In fact the term they had for countries like India means a lost or ruined country. Very often this was expressed as: "we don't want to become like India, Turkey or Poland". These were considered negative models. At the same time I

Conversations

have also seen references that the Chinese were sensitive to the fact that Indians were being forced to do all this. There is an account left by a Chinese official who traveled in India in 1870's. He traveled to Calcutta, Shimla, and Western India. About the Indians he commented that they were conquered and dominated by foreigners, but that no one here seemed to think it was a terrible thing. "What a pity, what a shame!" he lamented

However, under the impact of the anti-colonial struggle here and the anti-imperialist movement in China, sympathy for each other becomes more evident. The Hindustani Ghadar Party started working actively in China, and had a lot influence among the Punjabi soldiers and people in those areas. A very interesting phase in relations between Indians and Chinese began. Around 1925-27 there was a huge tide of revolutionary nationalist upsurge in China, which directly threatened British and other imperialist interests in China. Indian security forces were used to shoot down Chinese, but because of the active mobilisation done by the Ghadar Party and others, you began to have cases when Indian soldiers and policemen – sometimes whole battalions – refused to fire on Chinese. In one case in Canton one detachment of Indian policemen deserted and landed in front of the governor of the province and said they wanted to join the Chinese side. The governor was at first a little suspicious -- after all, these were the same people who were on the other side. When they saw his hesitation, they said forthrightly – "look, we have burnt our boats. There is no going back for us, so you

either take us, or you kill us". So he recruited them and paid them more than what they were getting under the British!

During World War II, the Indian National Army had a major contingent in China and had a dominant influence in the Indian community there. That turned out to be unfortunate for India-China relations, because China was occupied by Japan, which was helping Subhash Chandra Bose. Indians were not at all against China and even Subhash Chandra Bose never condoned Japan's occupation of China. But he had his own dealings. So, when the war ended, all those in the INA were considered collaborators, and there was no sympathy for Indians, even though they were in a bad state at the end of the war. Most Indians in China were uprooted and repatriated, almost forcibly, at that time.

SK: A final question -- was Tibet historically a part of China as is claimed by them?

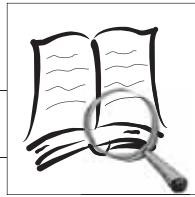
MT: The Chinese did not directly administer Tibet and other outlying regions, in the same way that they ruled the rest of China. Under the last imperial dynasty, they had a kind of alliance or loose administration under a Chinese Resident, and the Tibetans were more or less autonomous. My view is that you cannot look at history and say categorically whether Tibet is a part of China or not part of China. Depending on how strongly you feel about it, there is a case on both sides. You cannot say that just because China sent expeditions to Lhasa to assert the rule of the emperor, that Tibet is part of China. But Chinese give this as the reason. The Tibetans contin-

ued to follow their own Dalai Lama and other lamas. However, these lamas were recognized by the Chinese emperors.

When the Revolution of 1911 broke out in China, ending the Chinese empire, many outlying regions and even provinces of China proper declared their independence. So did Tibet. Britain at this time supported the Tibetan claim to independence. While the Tibetans may have wanted their freedom, Britain was playing a geopolitical game, trying to detach it from China which was weak.

In the Shimla convention in 1912-13, Britain called a meeting of the Tibetan representative and the Chinese delegate in Calcutta and their own delegate, to settle the border, not between India and China, but between 'inner Tibet' and 'outer Tibet'. This is what was known as the McMahon Line. From what accounts I have seen, the Chinese envoy in India was put under tremendous pressure, they practically confined him to a room, and he initialed an agreement. But when this came before the national assembly in China, they refused to ratify it. Under international law it doesn't have validity if it is not ratified by the sovereign body of a country. But the British went ahead and said look, the Tibetans and we agree, so it doesn't matter if China doesn't recognize it.

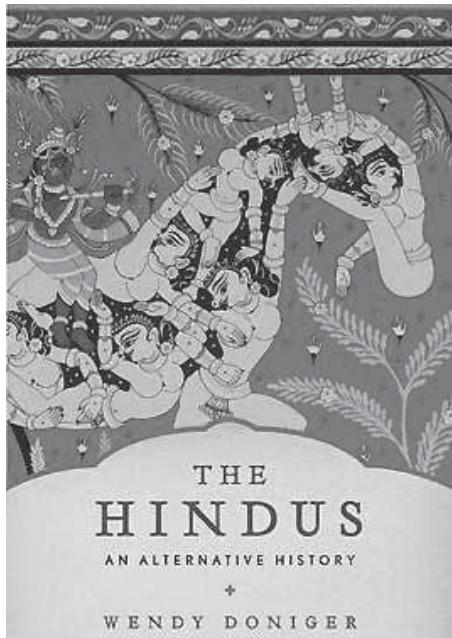
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Book Review

Wendy's Children Versus Wendy's Stepchildren

K. Raghavendra Rao



The Hindus – A Book by Wendy Doniger
Image source: Google images

For the last six months I have been sandwiched between two tomes, Wendy Doniger's own **THE HINDUS – An alternative history** (Penguin Books, London, 2009) and Wendy's stepchildren's **INVADING THE SACRED**, edited by Krishnan Ramaswamy, Antonio de Nicolas and Aditi Banerji (Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 2007). Having just finished both, I tried to relate the two. The result is the brief rumination that follows.

The concept of Wendy's children is, of course, that of Rajiv Malhotra, perhaps the most colourful of Wendy's stepchildren. However 'Wendy's stepchildren' is my humble creation. While Wendy's children can be traced back to Wendy's own intellectual womb, her stepchildren were born out of wedlock, as it were, to harass their stepmother for being the mother of her children! If Wendy had not been there, there would have been no Wendy's children, and if there were no Wendy's children, there would have been no need for Wendy's stepchildren. It is ultimately a quarrel within the joint family, since all of them, Wendy, her children and stepchildren share a common geographical and cultural space. That common space is the currently declining West. The question nagging me, a Hindu living in a genuinely Hindu space, is: Why worry about their quarrel? Why should we rack our brains about it? Their need for constituting a neo-Hindu identity to survive in a non-Hindu universe seems to be irrelevant to us in India. But it is not so irrelevant at one level, because we have amidst us, right here on the soil of our punyabhoomi, a small number of people engaged in a similar enterprise, less for identity insecurities and more for immediate political gains in an electoral democracy. Thus there is

some connection between politically motivated local Hindu elite and the diaspora Hindus worried about their identity. In fact, there is some evidence that the local Hindutva forces received financial support from the diaspora in their elections.

But for both groups, Hinduism poses an impossible identity challenge. Dr. Ambedkar whom Wendy's stepchildren may not like and whom the Hindutva brigade hugs politically as a matter of political expediency, asked the question, Who is a Hindu? His clear answer was that Hindu is a non-existent category and the real identity of Hindus so-called was merely their caste identity. The argument that the colonial rulers denied us agency and identity is true but it is not the whole truth. Colonial rulers could get away with their version of Hinduism because Hinduism itself was potentially favourable to them in their divide-and-rule ploy. Identity issues make no sense to Hinduism because of its basic pluralism, hierarchy, hegemony and structural centrifugalism. To see this is the strength of Wendy, if not of her children. This is also why the stepchildren unleash such animosity against her. I am not suggesting that errors of scholarship, the misapplication of western psychoanalytical categories to

Hindu myths of gods, spotted by the stepchildren, can be dismissed. But the point of the stepchildren is elsewhere. It is simply because Wendy, all her sins and evils counted and condemned, can still flaunt before the identity-hungry stepchildren the futility of seeking a Hindu identity! The Hindutva people, whatever their rhetoric, realize the pluralistic nature of Hinduism and now, under the pressure of electoral democracy, are ready, as practical politicians, to abandon the agenda to concoct a strong Hindu identity.

As for Wendy's volume, I think it is a good read with its quirky scholarship, its amusingly absurd psychoanalytical interpretations and her relaxing sense of humour. Her easy-going and light-footed prose helps. But Wendy's essential makes her vision of India, if not of Hindus, somewhat fascinating in an identity-obsessed post-modern world. The stepchildren's grouse is that their Hinduism is less compatible with Hinduism on the ground than Wendy's children's distorted and negatively motivated Hinduism. I think the stepchildren, like Gandhi earlier, have fallen into the binary trap of orientalism – spiritual India versus materialistic West. This is to miss the essential nature of Hinduism – a structure that deconstructs itself in order to reconstruct and survive. After all, the Hindu sense of evil has no Christian or Islamic sharp edge. What is evil in one context is seen as good in another context. A demon like Ravana is also a devotee of Siva. The notions of pure evil and pure good belong to dualistic Christianity and Manichean Islam. After all, our four *purusharthas* do not divide into the spiritual and the material. It is in their balance and

existentially negotiated equation that human life is lived.

At the heart of the dispute lies a crucial moral issue. It is the issue of whether being a Hindu is a mere matter of individual choice or whether it is a choice embedded in a collective identity. If it is the latter, then how can a Hindu who flees from a collective Hindu environment to non-Hindu objectives realize in an alien land any moral claim to a Hindu identity? Also, given the nature of Hinduism, where is the real need for a Hindu to flaunt his identity? Identity-mongering is a non-Hindu phenomenon. This can be reformulated as: do Wendy's stepchildren have the same right to a Hindu identity as a native-confined local Hindu?

One of the major and fascinating figures in the camp of Wendy's stepchildren, Professor Balagangadhara or as he prefers to be called, Balu, has asserted that it is possible to arrive at an objective and neutral interpretation and assessment of a religious system. One need not be a born Hindu to judge or interpret Hinduism. This leads to the thorny epistemological question of the relationship between faith and knowledge. Is religion a matter of mere faith? No definite answer is possible and one must allow the validity of both positions. Suppose one does not accept the validity of the sacred as a category and consign it to ignorance and superstition, then how can a believer in the sacred assess his position? Can a believer call a non-believer ignorant and superstitious? For instance, in his magnum opus, *The Heathen in His Blindness*, Balu displays formidable scholarship in the field of Christian theology and

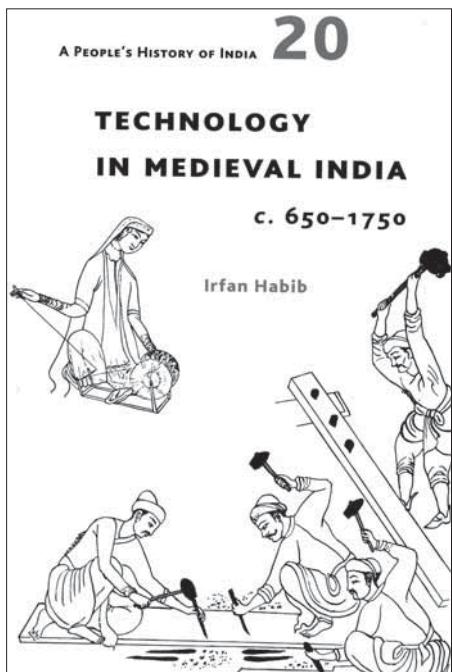
the history of the church. Does it make him a Christian? But Balu's most brilliant and insightful thesis is the thesis of secularization of Christianity. The point of the thesis is that the secular nature of Western secularism is suspect because it is Christianity disguised in secular garbs. But then it is worth asking whether secularized Christianity is the same thing as Christianity proper? Balu's thesis seems to reject the possibility of the secular a priori.

I come to the last issue that cannot be avoided when talking about Wendy's stepchildren. That is the issue of whether Wendy's stepchildren are engaged in a massive effort to propagate Hindutva on a global scale. I had occasion to put this question to Balu during one of the workshops organised on the campus of Kuvempu University in Shimoga, Karnataka, by one of his disciples. Balu's answer, if I recollect, was autobiographical. He said that his whole life was a negation of such an impression. He said as a boy he spent most of his time with the neighbouring Muslim family, that as a college student he was a radical Marxist. He said that what he was doing was to question the Western Christian attempt to besmirch Hinduism. But intentionality is one thing, and objective Hindutva, but his views taken in their objectivity seem to be packaged Hindutva with scholarly coating. Whatever his Marxist past, he has now nothing to do with it. He rejects the theoretical possibility of secularism. In a recent speech at the Department of Political Science, Karnatak Univeristy, he advanced the remarkable claim that Lingayat Vachanakaras did not raise a revolt or revolution against the Hindu

(Contd. on 29)

A Valuable Contribution to History of Technology in India

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Technology in Medieval India by Irfan Habib

Habib, Irfan. 2008. *Technology in Medieval India*. Delhi: Tulika Books. Pp. 139, Figures 41, Tables 3, Maps 2. Price Rs. 275/-.

For a long time History of Science and Technology in India was a neglected field of study, except for some pioneering efforts by Debiprasad Chattopadhyay (*History of Science and Technology in Ancient India*, 1982, 1986). The jingoists on the other hand found everything – from rockets to hydrogen bombs to aeroplanes

– in ancient India. In recent years Indian National Science Academy contributed greatly to this field through the efforts of B.V. Subbarayappa and A.K. Bag, though the short essays on different technologies proved a bit sketchy. Inspired by the monumental series on Chinese science and civilisation by Joseph Needham, D.P. Chatopadhyaya (not to be confused with Debiprasad!) brought out a gigantic series under the Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture. It's a vast and ambitious project of 75 volumes, out of which 16 volumes (about 70 books) have already come out. But its huge encyclopaedic sweep covers everything and thus History of Science and Technology loses focus. In the last few years Infinity Foundation has brought out several volumes (edited by D.P. Agrawal and O.C. Handa) on Harappan architecture, technology and its legacy, iron, copper and zinc technologies, traditional technologies of domestic architecture, hydraulics, medicine, etc. In this series the main emphasis is on material (archaeological, metallurgical, etc) evidence rather than on literary sources. As most of these books deal with ancient India, Irfan Habib's book on medieval technology is a very welcome addition.

Irfan Habib is one of our best known historians who are greatly interested in History of Science and Technology. Unlike many other historians his

writings are marked by a remarkable lucidity, scientific precision and a lot of hard evidence, and of course a Marxist approach. Though his specialization is in the medieval period, he has also written/edited books on prehistory and Indus civilization. He always studies the field covered by his books in great detail and comes up with very significant insights. I was a bit surprised when I saw his book on Indus civilization as the period was far removed from his specialization, but I could find not only some rare information in the book, but also some valuable insights. In the book on Indus civilization, unlike others, Habib gives due importance to all levels of the Indus trade: local village-town trade; long-distance trade within the territory of the civilisation and commerce with other regions.

In the present book he has divided the theme in four main chapters dealing with agriculture, crafts, military technology and the social and cultural environment of the medieval Indian technology. He has added supplementary information in extracts and bibliographic details in notes.

Habib makes some very significant observations on the character of Indian Technology (Chapter 4). He points out that there was over-specialization in India. Quoting Pelshart, Habib informs us that he found in Agra goldsmiths, calico painters,

embroiderers, carpet makers, cotton weavers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, tailors, masons, builders, stone cutters, a hundred crafts for a job. A job which one workman will do in Holland passes (here) through four men's hands before it is finished. Of course, there was a competition which compelled an artisan to sharpen his skills rather than improve his tools, as tools were costly.

The author also explains that such specialization was brought about by a socially set division of labour which inhibited technological progress because of the hereditary caste. It is also to be noted that though artisans were employed by kings and aristocracy, the tools had to be owned by artisans. Since tools cannot be separated from the artisans, and capitalist relations had not yet developed, craft technology remained outside the scope of externally induced change. Habib, however, points out that the very formulation of the problem in this manner makes an opposite question inevitable. Why did not the classes which controlled a share in the social surplus enter the productive process by providing tools and so be able to improve technology, as happened partly in Western Europe from the sixteenth century onwards? This raises the problem of ideological orientation. How far were such classes in India at all interested in technology and its improvement?

Habib also points out that unlike Europe, in ancient India production technology was apparently not brought into any recognizable relationship with theoretical science. Habib contrasts Bhoja's fanciful devices, often difficult to interpret, which were totally divorced from any association with practical tech-

nology, let alone the productive process. Habib informs us that Abu'l Fazl insists that there were innovations too in the manufacture of guns and muskets, and describes a device employed by Akbar, the ship's 'camel', which was invented in Europe nearly a century later. In chemistry there was the invention of water-cooling through the use of saltpetre, which seems to be independent of any discovery made in Europe. Still, the Mughal Empire did not produce even a single worthwhile text on crafts and agriculture. Contrasting the slow progress of Indian technology, compared to Europe, Habib attributes the European progress to the growth of rationalism, the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries and the expanding volume of capital available for technological experimentation. This according to Habib explains why European technology was able to leave the rest of the world far behind by the end of the 18th century.

Below we will highlight some of his important observations on different medieval technologies and their dates.

In Chapter 1, Habib discusses technology related to agriculture, crops, irrigation, processing, etc. We are told that a significant device, the draw-bar, which enabled the draught animal to walk round in a circle and so carry out threshing and turn rotary mills, appeared only at the dawn of early medieval times. Animals could be used for milling only when the mortar-and-pestle hand-mill became completely rotary. Habib dates the use of the draw-bar and the consequential circular track of the oxen for threshing and milling spread to different parts of India between the

fifth and the tenth centuries.

Habib points out that no fundamental change in the structure of the ox-drawn plough seems to have occurred; ploughs however varied a great deal even within adjacent regions in India, largely according to soil. During medieval times the Indian plough acquired the seed rill, which might possibly have diffused from China, which knew of it as early as the first century BCE.

Though in ancient India the two-humped Bactrian camel, a hardy animal of colder climes, was known, the introduction of the dromedary (one humped camel) was quite late. The dromedary has great tractate power and exceptional stamina for work in warm, dry zones, and was thus eminently suited for use as an all-purpose draught animal in the Indus basin.

About the crops, Habib informs us that by the end of the sixteenth century, the Indian peasant was familiar with an exceptionally large number of crops. In Abu'l Fazl's list the number of rabi crops ranges from 16 to 21, and of kharif crops, from 17 to 29. In the Agra province the number is 19 for rabi crops and 28 for kharif. Such a large number of crops made Indian agriculture especially rich in the variety of its products.

Opium and henna were early medieval introductions from the Islamic world. After the Portuguese intrusion in the Indian seas, a new set of plants began to be added to the already long list of Indian crops. Tobacco and maize were cultivated in Gujarat by 1613 and its cultivation spread rapidly to all parts of India thereafter. Other New-World na-

tives, like groundnut, ordinary and sweet potato, tomato and okra were acclimatized still later.

We learn that the first reference to sericulture in India occurs in the report of Ma Huan, the Chinese navigator who visited Bengal in 1422. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bengal became one of the great mulberry silk-producing regions of the world. The worm here was multivoltine, enabling six crops to be gathered in the year.

We are told that grafting, as a means of extending the cultivation of particular varieties of fruit or developing new varieties, does not seem to have been employed in India before the Mughal times. The Mughal kings introduced the grafting of the sweet cherry in Kashmir, oranges, mulberry, etc. Quite a few New World fruits were introduced by the Portuguese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as pineapple, papaya, cashew nut and guava.

In India the first definite reference to the noria (a vertical wheel that has water containers on its rim) occurs in an early version of the *Panchatantra* (c. 300 CE). The earliest allusion to this 'pot-garland' occurs in the *Mandasor* inscription of 532 CE. The first express statement about the use of gears is from Babur when he gives his classic description of the 'Persian wheel'. This geared saqiya or 'Persian wheel' was crucial for the relatively dry Indus basin because it could give a constant flow.

In this chapter Habib describes the large irrigation works constructed in the south in the eleventh century, for example, the Grand Anicut, a dam over 300 metres long, up to 5.5 me-

tres high and up to 18 metres thick, over the Kaveri river. With the coming into use of lime and gypsum mortar and other techniques, Delhi saw, in the fourteenth century, fairly sophisticated waterworks. Firoz Tughluq built long and large canals in the north Indian plains. He created a veritable network of canals taking off from the Satluj and Yamuna, besides other smaller rivers.

As far as processing of grains is concerned, the appearance in India of both the rotary mill and the vertical peg-handle goes back to the fifth century. It seems that the rotary oil mill is also of the same date. Habib thinks that not only the ox-driven oil-mill, but the draw-bar too must have arrived in Himachal by c. 800 CE.

The archaeological evidence from Taxila and Charsadda shows that alcohol distillation may have been invented in India in c. 150 BCE. In the twelfth century cooling of the still was improved to obtain pure alcohol. As we know, in Zawar (Rajasthan) pure zinc distillation was achieved through the use of clay retorts in the 12th century.

Chapter 2 discusses textile technology. Habib tells us that the earliest depictions in India of the crank-handle belong to the seventeenth century in relation to the spinning wheel, and the crank-handle appears on the cotton gin only in a Kangra painting of c. 1750. The scutch-bow (to loosen cotton fibre) was very probably an ancient Indian invention, alluded to in the *Jatakas* and more explicitly mentioned in Sanskrit dictionaries of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Habib puts the limits of the diffusion of the spinning wheel within India to the first half of the fourteenth century.

ry. The earliest evidence for the loom in India, however, belongs to the fifteenth century.

Dyeing was achieved through several techniques. The tie-and-dye method (now called bandhna, English: 'bandana') has been traced back to Bana's *Harshacharita*, which means that it was already practiced in the early seventh century. Habib thinks that there can be no finality here, but the likelihood is that cloth-printing had become an established craft in India by the fourteenth century.

Regarding metallurgy, Habib seems to be a bit conservative in dating. He places wootz steel only to the 13th century whereas it could go back to the Mauryan times. Even Alexander was presented with 100 talents of such steel. From the late fifteenth century, the Indian iron industry was called upon to make hand-guns and muskets, and, later, iron guns. For those interested in the story of iron metallurgy, two recent books by Vibha Tripathi (*History of Iron Technology in India* 2008) and Balasubramaniam (*Marvels of Indian Iron Through the Ages* 2008) are very well documented and up-to-date too.

Habib describes the evidence of other metals like gold, silver, zinc, etc also. Zawar gives the evidence of pure zinc distillation in the 12th century, earlier than anywhere else, though zinc smelting can be traced back to 4th century BCE.

In this chapter Habib goes into the details of building technology, use of gypsum, mortars, etc. He says that the arcuate mode of construction that India received in the thirteenth century was a fusion not only of two mortars, but also of two distinct

styles, the Byzantine and the Sassanid. The early Byzantine preference for the pointed arch and dome on drum and pendentives was combined with the Sassanid emphasis on the barrel vault and dome on squinches. By the thirteenth century, all these had become part of the 'Saracenic' architectural system, now imported into India.

About the paper technology, Habib informs us that with the establishment of the Sultanate, paper manufacture arrived at Delhi. Amir Khusrau, in 1289, mentions paper-making as a contemporary craft; and in a verse he alludes to the glazing of paper with a rubber or muhra. In 1452 Ma Huan, in his account of the products of Bengal, spoke of a kind of white paper which is also made from tree bark, praising it for being 'glossy and smooth like a deer skin'.

Though glass was known to the Indians from c. 800 BCE, a new element was brought into glassware production in Iran and India by the twelfth century, namely, enamelling. As to the spectacles, they were a European invention. There are references to convex spectacles worn by a Vijayanagara minister in the first half of the sixteenth century and by Faizi, Akbar's poet laureate, in 1593-95.

Habib describes the use of two chief instruments to measure the altitudes and positions of heavenly bodies by the Medieval Indian astronomers. One was the simple sundial, the other, the complex astrolabe. It often contained on one of its discs a list of places with their coordinates. At the raised rim of the mother disc, very fine and accurate graduation was attempted to mark each of the 360 degrees of the circle, essential for

measuring altitude. The astrolabe maker was also called upon to draw circles and segments of circles, where again geometrical accuracy had to be secured.

The Mughal period saw the appearance of variolation or inoculation against small pox which was first reported from Bengal in 1731, when local tradition was quoted as putting its beginnings at about 150 years earlier. The other craft could similarly claim to be a harbinger of plastic surgery (rhinoplasty).

The third chapter we learn from him about the military technology, transport and navigation. In the seventh century CE chariots had finally given way in India to the armoured horseman. King Devaraya of Vijayanagara collected 10,000 Muslim and 60,000 Hindu horsemen 'acquainted with the art of archery', and successfully invaded the Bahmani dominions in 1443-44. However, the horse still lacked the three essential items: the saddle, the stirrup and the horse-shoe. At Khajuraho, a stray sculpture of the tenth century does show the stirrup, and thereafter it seems to have become common. It is distinctly shown, for example, in the famous horse at Konarak in Orissa, datable to c. 1200 CE. The Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho (tenth century) shows bow-shaped stirrups with broad flat rests. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the stirrup is also generally of the shape of a large and broad ring, 'apparently made of layers of leather stitched together or of wood cut into a log'. While the Delhi Sultanate cavalry thus had iron stirrups from the beginning, it is possible that their use in some parts of India, in fact, preceded the arrival of the

Sultanate armies there. The history of the iron horse-shoe is apparently much shorter than that of the stirrup. Fakhr-i Mudabbir, in his work on warfare written in Iltutmish's reign (1210-36 CE), mentions how a horse was shod with the nal, and Amir Khusrau, in 1283, tells us of the curious quality of the horse that when nails (mekh) are driven into its hooves, it runs better.

Habib also describes two fearful weapons: the first was naphtha or Greek fire; the other weapon was the mangonel or trebuchet. Apparently, the latter apparatus consisted of a wooden beam pivoted on a wooden stand. The short arm of the beam had a counterweight put on it, while the long arm had a sling suspended at its far end which carried the missile, usually a round large piece of stone. The long arm pulled down by rope by many men would raise the weighted short arm. If now the men all together released the rope, the short arm would fall, making the long arm ascend fast, and the missile would shoot forth out of the swinging sling.

Habib explains that rockets as a form of pyrotechny or fireworks pre-date the true artillery (cannon and muskets). Quoting Gode, he says that on the basis of a study of formulae for fireworks in a Sanskrit work of c. 1500, that these were transmitted from China to India about 1400 CE. It seems that the true gunpowder cannons were being used in various parts of India only by the latter half of the fifteenth century.

From Habib's description it would appear that by the end of the sixteenth century, the heaviest guns in the world were being cast in India,

the climax being reached with the famous Malik Maidan cast in bronze at Ahmadnagar, with a length of 4.06 metres, diameter at the muzzle 1.65 metres, and diameter of the bore, 0.72 metre. Habib explains the difficulties of casting large pieces of iron which prevented the casting of whole barrels in single moulds. Indian iron cannon thus generally consisted of wrought (not cast) iron bars or cylinders, held together by rings to form the barrel. It is not easy to separate the history of the cannon from that of the musket. In India the musket seems to have arrived quite early, possibly in the fifteenth century, when it appears in two Jain book illustrations. For smoothening the inside of the barrel, Akbar invented a superb device, whereby animal power could be used through pindrum-gearing to rotate drills inside the barrels of several muskets simultaneously.

During Firoz Tughluq's times (1351-88), a variety of transport could be hired: camel, horse, cart, palanquin; the cheapest was the ox-cart. From Awadh (Ayodhya) to Delhi a journey on a camel each way took forty days. Goods or grain were transported on ox backs. The roads that radiated from Delhi, were marked with pillars displaying the distances traversed. Tughluq is said to have established a building and a hospice at the end of each day's journey (manzil), with provision for eatables, and also planted trees on both sides of the road. As regards the river transport, quoting Afif (c. 1400 CE), Habib tells us that large and broad boats ply on the Yamuna river, some able to carry 5000 mans (44 metric tons) of grain, and some 7,000 mans (62 tons); even the smaller boats could carry 2000 mans (17.6 tons) of grain. The government maintained its means of communica-

tions through managing two distinct systems, one based on horses, the other on human relay runners. It is certain that the ekka and tonga are post-seventeenth century innovations as the Mughal India completely lacked these cheap and quick means of passenger conveyance. Bullock-carts thus constituted practically the sole form of wheeled traffic over the larger part of India. Bridges could not be built over the large rivers originating in the Himalayas, but still spanned fairly respectable rivers, like the Gomati.

We learn that the postal system was not open to the public: the couriers were usually enjoined not to convey private mail. For ordinary private persons, there were pattamars or bazar qasids ('bazaar couriers'), who announced in each town that they would be going to such and such a place and invited the public to entrust their letters for that place to them.

Unlike Marco Polo and others, the account of Nicolo Conti, who used these ships during 1419-44 and gave a fairly favourable description of them. Some of them, he says, were 'much larger than ours, capable of containing two thousand butts [casks] and with five sails and as many masts'. The lower part of a ship was constructed with three planks for reinforcement; and 'some ships are so built in compartments' as to allow them to remain afloat even if a part of their structure got wrecked.

Habib thinks that it is most likely that Indian and other Arabian Sea navigators picked up the magnetic compass from the visiting Chinese ships, and the navigational use of it then spread to the Mediterranean, where it subsequently underwent

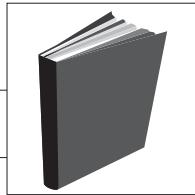
much development.

Though the author appreciates the advance in the Indian ship-building industry he regrets that it did not do away with the lag between European and Indian shipping. Essentially, while they succeeded in having the same kinds of ships, the Indian navigators could not acquire the skill and instruments (both of which are, of course, inseparable) of their European counterparts. An Indian lexicographer, writing in 1739, recognizes that the telescope was a pilot's observational instrument, but no attempt seems to have been made to manufacture telescopes in India.

Habib seems to be a bit too critical of the state of technology in medieval India; in contrast, Dharampal (Indian Science & Technology in the Eighteenth Century 2000; Despoliation and Defaming of India. Vol 1, 1999) emphasises that India was far ahead of Europe in the 17th-18th centuries both in technology and trade. Dharampal (1999) informs us that by 1810, Dr. Carpue of London was able to build up the technique of a new plastic surgery derived and based on the Indian method. Dharampal also records that 73% of world manufactures were done in the Chinese and the Indian regions around 1750. Even around 1820 these two regions produced some 60% of world manufactures. One also expected from Habib a greater emphasis on the proverbial textile technology of India.

The quality of Habib's important book could be further improved by giving references in the text itself, instead of under notes. The first few pages are erroneously arranged.

(Contd. on pg 23)



Study

Redefining the Harappan Hinterland

D.P. Agrawal, J.S. Kharakwal, Y.S. Rawat, T. Osada & Pankaj Goyal

<http://www.antiquity.ac.uk>

The find and its context



Figure 1. Map of the north-west Indian subcontinent showing the main Harappan sites mentioned in the text (courtesy of Dr A. Uesugi).

The region associated with the Indus civilisation (now generally named Harappan after its central settlement) is estimated at between 1 and 1.5 million km² in extent, based on the widespread distribution of Harappan cultural material from Kashmir to Gujarat (Figure 1). For a third-millennium culture, this was a vast area to be administered from the floodplain sites of Mohenjodaro, Ganweriwala or Harappa. However, recent research has shown that the structure of the Harappan hinter-

land is misconceived as an urban or imperial network. In reality, the urban places sited on the alluvial plain, which were engaged in agriculture, were surrounded by numerous dispersed supply centres, which may themselves have been non-urban and Chalcolithic, Neolithic or hunter-gatherer in their culture.

The urban centres

Most Harappan towns (e.g. Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Ganweriwala, Kalibangan, Dholavira, Rakhigarhi, Pathani Damb) are situated in the Indus-Saraswati river valleys. Here they controlled the major routes: Mohenjodaro, for example, sits astride the crossroads of inland routes, river-ways and the sea. In the region occupied by these towns there is abundant alluvium for agricultural



Figure 2. Map showing the main sites of Gujarat involved in resource procurement.

production, and thus they can feed themselves. But by contrast, there are hardly any minerals (Kenoyer 1998; Possehl 2002; Agrawal 2007). Such minerals had to be procured from distant regions of the Harappan 'Empire', that is the surrounding mountainous areas.

Procurement

The Harappan elite needed ornaments made of gold, silver, agate, chalcedony, steatite, copper, shell, lapis lazuli and sodalite, all of which could be found in the northern sub-Himalayas, along with deodar wood (reported from several Harappan sites), talc, *shilajeet*, and herbs. Lahiri (1999) has done an exhaustive documentation of the raw materials used by the Harappans and their sources, though the actual trade routes may not have been as regular and formalised as those mapped by her. Morrison (2006: 288-92) shows how hunter-gatherers had control of many forest resources and managed their long term supply to the Harappans and their successors. In the words of a recent student, Randall Law (2008: 8) '*...it now appears that practically all of the raw material of the raw stone and metal that Harappans used came from highlands surrounding the Indus valley.*'

All the sites in the foothills marked on Figure 1 were involved in the

procurement of these raw materials (Manda, Kotla Nihang, Ropar in the sub-Himalayan region; Ganeshwar, Jodhpura, and Rakhigarhi in Haryana and Rajasthan; Hisham Dheri, Gumla, Rehman Dheri, Ranaghundai, Lohumjodaro, Nindowari in north-west Pakistan; Shortugai (Possehl 1999) in Afghanistan; the coastal sites of Makran; and Surkotada, Bagasara, Dholavira, Kuntasi, Kanmer, Shikarpur in Gujarat).

Small sites like Saraikhola, Hisham Dheri, Gumla, Rehman Dheri, Surjangan, Rana Ghundai, Lohumjodaro, Nindowari and Mehi probably procured steatite, agate, and bitumen. Lapis lazuli and sodalite occurs in southern Rajasthan and eastern Gujarat. Agate occurs mostly in Saurashtra and Kachchh and to some extent in west Pakistan (Lohumjodaro, Rehman Dheri, Saraikhola etc.).

The sub-Himalayan sites like Manda (Jammu), Kotla Nihang and Ropar (Punjab), Kashipur (ancient Govisana in Kumaun) probably served as gateway procurement centres for copper ingots, deodar wood, *shilajit*, cinnabar, talc, etc. from the highlands, as the rivers become navigable at these points.

Manufacture

In addition, many of the outlying settlements were involved in processing and the production of manufactured goods. Dholavira (which yielded 1212 drill bits: Prabhakar & Bisht *pers. comm.*.) thrived on its industrial exports of agate and shell artefacts (Bhan & Gowda 2003: 51-80). From Kumaun, a large number of copper mines and copper-working implements have been reported from the Pithoragarh region (Agrawal

1999), where there were also huge deposits of sedimentary talc. The Jodhpura people lived close to copper mines and did the dirty work of smelting for the Harappans (Miller 2007). In Kashmir, the hoard of carnelian beads of Harappan vintage at Burzahom shows that they had trade contacts. In the far north-west Bactrian region, Shortguai served as a processing centre for lapis lazuli. In Gujarat, sites like Kanmer yielded a large amount of bead-making material (150 stone beads and rough outs; 160 drill bits; 433 faience beads; and 20 000 steatite beads) indicating their industrial importance (Kharakwal *et al.* 2008). The agate quarries are located just about 20km from Kanmer. The coastal sites of Sutkagen Dor, Khera Kot, Balakot, Allahdino, Dholavira, Kuntasi, etc. probably helped procure and process shell material for beads and bangles.

Peoples

Several small sites in Gujarat (e.g. Surkotada, Pabumath, Desalpur, Nagwada, Gola Dhor, Kuntasi, Kotada, Padri, Rajpipla, Kanmer and Shikarpur; Figure 2) have disproportionately large fortifications compared to their settlement size. Such massive expenditure of energy and material on fortifications could be justified for economic protection. This might suggest an unequal relationship between the core and periphery, but the relations need not be seen as coercive (Morrison 2006: 292). The contact between these manufacturing communities and the central places is shown by the distribution of artefacts. Jodhpura has yielded thousands of artefacts of Harappan type. At Shikarpur a Harappan clay seal with multiple impressions was found and Kanmer has also yielded three



Figure 3a. Three clay seals from Kanmer with unicorn motif.



Figure 3b. Top view of the three Kanmer seals (pictured in Figure 3a) with different motifs suggesting different uses/users

clay sealings with a central hole (Figures 3a and b).

The communities in the supply centres were probably differently constituted to those in urban centres on the plain. Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, rich in copper minerals, were peopled by Chalcolithic cultures (e.g. the Ganeshwar, Banas and Kayatha cultures). Elsewhere, in the mountain districts, the Harappans had mainly to deal with hunter-gatherer communities. The central places — Harappa, Ganweriwala, Mohenjodaro, Kalibangan, Dholavira — were urban and hierarchical, and probably sought to procure and control regional resources. Harappa could control trade conducted through the north-western passes and the Himalayan hinterland; Kalibangan and Rakhi-

garhi, the copper minerals of Khetri and the agate and shell industry of Dholavira.

We thus have a plausible model for the vast expanse of the Harappa culture: a network linking the supply of outlying resources in the highlands to the central places sited on the Indus and its tributaries.

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A Valuable Contribution... (Contd. from 20)

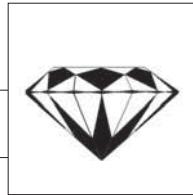
The long extracts (which are often ignored by a reader) do give us a flavour of the original sources but more quotations and fuller references would have been very useful. A detailed bibliography is a very

essential part of such a book which sadly is missing.

Habib has produced, in his quintessential lucid and cogent style, a very informative, critical, yet fascinating

account of the medieval technology and thus the book is a must for all interested in the History of Science and Technology in India.

Dharma Pal Agrawal is a distinguished scientist.



Jewels of India

Baji Raut: The Youngest Martyr of India

Posted on October 6, 2005 by
Subhas Chandra Pattanayak

Subhas Chandra Pattanayak

"NUHEN BANDHU, NUHEN EHA
CHITA,

E DESHA TIMIRA TALE E ALIB-
HA MUKATI SALITA".

(It is not a pyre, O Friends! When the country is in dark despair, it is the light of our liberty. It is our freedom-fire.)

When the dead body of BAJI RAUT was burning in the pyre, Sachi Rautroy, who was one of the seven Marxist revolutionaries whom time had chosen to be immortal by burning the mortal remains of THE YOUNGEST MARTYR OF INDIA, had, in the light of the pyre, on the cremation ground of Khannagar, Cuttack, in the night of an unforgettable October 10, 1938, had given this wordy expression to the inconsolable cries of his heart, while his other comrades: Baishnav Pattanayak, Ananta Pattanayak, Govinda Mohanty, Rabi Ghosh, Motilal Tripathy and Bishwanath Pasayat were doing the last service to his co-martyrs: Huruishi Pradhan, Raghu Nayak, Guri Nayak, Nata Malik, Laxmana Malik and Fagu Sahu.

The stanza quoted above is the first stanza of Sachi Rautroy's famous

poem "BAJI ROUT", which translated into English by Harindranath Chattopadyaya, had set the entire nation on an unprecedented motion for freedom of people from the Kings of princely States. People in various States were agitating against their respective ruling chiefs. But the supreme sacrifice the thirteen-year-old boy Baji Raut had given the necessary momentum to the movement that ultimately wiped out kingship from India.

Baji Raut, the light of liberty, was born in 1925 in the Village of Nilakanthapur in Dhenkanal. His father Hari Raut, had passed away when he was a tiny tot. He was brought up by his mother who was thriving on wages earned by rice-husking in the neighborhood. He had watched how mercilessly the King of Dhenkanal, Shankar Pratap Singhdeo was fleecing the poor villagers including his mother of their earnings by using armed forces. So, when Baishnav Charan Pattanayak of Dhenkanal town, later famous as Veer Baisnav, raised a banner of revolt against the King and founded Prajamandal, Baji joined it despite tender age.

Baishnav Charan Pattanayak deliberately joined as a painter in the Railways in order to be able to move from place to place free of cost by using a railway pass he was to obtain. Taking advantage of this Pass

he not only started moving from place to place along the Railway track, instigating people against the King, but also established contacts with leaders of National Congress at Cuttack and attracted their attention to the plight of the people of Dhenkanal.

He associated himself with the only revolutionary journal of those days, THE KRUSHAKA, which was being produced and published by the Marxists. Thus, while educating himself in Marxist revolutionary theory and practices, he prevailed upon local intellectual Hara Mohan Pattanayak and founded the people's movement called "Prajamandal Andolana". The tortured people of Dhenkanal joined this movement with rare and unheard of courage. Soon, subjects of adjoining Princely States also formed Praja Mandalas in their respective States.

Seeing this, many other kings offered their cooperation to the King of Dhenkanal to suppress the people's movement. King of Bolangir R.N.Singhdeo, King of Kalahandi P.K.Deo, Shankar Patap's father-in-law who was the King of Sareikela and the King of Keonjhar sent their armed troops to Dhenkanal to terrorize the people. The British authorities also sent from Calcutta a platoon of soldiers comprising 200 gunmen to assist him. The King of Dhenkanal unleashed a reign of

terror to suppress the mass movement.

For maintenance of these outside forces, Shankar Pratap clamped another tax on the people, called 'Rajabhakta Tax' or Loyalty Tax. He declared that whosoever fails to pay this tax, shall be adjudged a traitor and punished accordingly.

The houses of the people who did not pay the Rajbhakta Tax were being razed to ground by use of royal elephants and all their properties were being confiscated. Such repressive measures failed to deter the people from joining the movement.

Deciding to crush the movement forever, the king pressed his entire force against the leaders of the movement. All the ancestral properties of Veer Baishnav were confiscated. Hara Mohan Pattanayak and other top leaders were taken into custody in a surprise raid on September 22, 1938. But the royal forces could not arrest Veer Baishnav Pattanayak.

While frantically searching for him, news reached the palace that he was camping in the Village of Bhuban. The armed forces of the King attacked Bhuban on October 10, 1938 for the third time and destroyed many houses by using the elephants and tortured many a persons. But they could not elicit any information on Veer Baishnav despite use of all sorts of brutality.

They arrested as many as eight persons and let loose terror to elicit information on Baishnav Pattanayak. At this stage a source informed that he has escaped by jumping into the river Brahmani and swam

across to the villages on the other side. The troop started immediate chase. People obstructed. To disperse them, they started firing. Two of the villagers lost their life on the spot. The troop rushed to the nearest ferry at Nilakanthapur on River Brahmani.

Baji Raut was on the guard at the Ghat at that time. He was ordered by the troop to ferry them across. He refused.

By that time he had heard from those who fled from Bhuban details of the brutality the troop had resorted to there and had understood that if Veer Baishnav Pattanayak was to be protected, the troops were to be obstructed. He therefore refused to comply with the command.

The royal troop threatened to kill him if he did not ferry them across immediately. He rejected their orders again. Surrender to the Pajamandal first, he retorted.

A soldier hit his head with the butt of his gun that fractured his skull severely. He collapsed. But he rose. He collected whatever little strength was left in him, and raising his voice to the highest pitch beyond even his strength, warned his villagers of the presence of the royal troop. A soldier pierced his bayonet into the soft skull of the brave boy even as another fired at him. Somebody who was watching this cruelty ran to the people and informed them. Charged with wrath and contempt, people in hundreds rushed to the spot like angry lions. Seeing them, instead of running after Baisnav Pattanayak, the panicked troops fled for life.

Taking hold of Baji's boat after killing him, the troop oared away in utmost haste; but while escaping, opened fire on the chasing masses causing four more deaths.

Baishnav Pattanayak collected the corpses and brought them by train to Cuttack. The news spread like wild fire. People rushed to the Cuttack Station and received the dead bodies raising revolutionary slogans with Lal Salaam to the martyrs. Post mortem tests on bodies of the martyrs were conducted at Cuttack medical. Eminent leaders of freedom movement like Sarangadhar Das, Nabakrshna Chowdhury, Bhagabati Panigrahi, Gouranga Charan Das, Sudhir Ghosh, Surendra Dwivedy and Gurucharan Pattanayak discussed with Veer Baishnav Pattanayak and it was decided to lead the last journey of Baji Raut and his co-martyrs to Khanagar crematorium through the lanes of the town so that everybody in Cuttack including the women and children could have glimpses of the immortal sons of Orissa, who sacrificed their lives to emancipate their people from tyranny in the dark State (Andhari Mulaka) of Dhenkanal.

Then such a thing happened which has no parallel in our history. You can take it as the rarest of the rare events of our freedom movement. People volunteered to carry the bodies of the martyrs in their bullock carts in a procession to the cremation ground. Quite unusual it was. The peoples of Orissa worship bullocks. One cannot imagine that a person of Orissa can allow his bullocks to carry a corpse. But this happened. Such a thing had never happened earlier and has never hap-

pened thereafter. Patriotic fervor was so high. Ah! How it pains to feel that we have now become a different people altogether!

Sachi Rautray, Anant Pattnaik, Govind Ch Mohanty, Bishwanath Pashayat, Rabi Ghosh and Motilal Tripathy drove bullock carts carrying the martyrs' bodies. Thousands and thousands of people thronged the streets to join that unheard of obituary march led by Veer Baisnav Pattanayak and other luminaries of our freedom struggle like Bhagavati Panigrahi, Prana Nath Pattanayak, Guru Charan Pattanayak, Nabakrushna Chowdhury, Surendranath Dwivedy, Pranakrushna Padhiari, Sarangadhara Das, Gouranga Charan Das and Sudhir Ghosh etc. Excepting only the occasion of cremation of Kulabruddha Madhusudan Das, (the immortal Madhubabu) Cuttack had never, and has never, witnessed such an obituary procession.

Sachi Rautroy took several days to regain his composure to finish his poem Baji Raut that he had started on the cremation ground itself in the light of the pyre.

When, after the elapse of sixty-seven long years, this episode strikes the mind, somebody from within cries helplessly at the ghastly fall of our society where the supreme sacrifice of this splendid boy has been lost in the labyrinth of vested interests that have taken over our beloved motherland.

Time has changed. Our democracy has changed into plutocracy. Shankar Pratap, the very person under whose tyrannical grip Baji Raut had lost his life has been im-

mortalized as a man on whose "sad" demise, the Parliament of India had to rise in respect.

I must make you note that the people of Dhenkanal had not sent him to the Parliament. But he had become a member of our Parliament by the help of his old collaborators in crime, R.N.Singhdeo and P.K.Deo, who had formed a political outfit of their own and by corrupting the election process had succeeded in capturing so many seats in the State Assembly that they could send tyrants like Shankar Pratap to the upper chamber of Parliament. What more disrespect to the memory of Baji Raut could have been committed in this Country?

We have, as a people, failed. Therefore, not only the tyrant Shankar Pratap, but also his wife and son have occupied seats in the ramparts of our democracy many a time!

We have, as a people, measurably failed. Therefore, history has witnessed that those, who were sabotaging our freedom struggle, have befooled us to the extent of becoming Prime and Deputy Prime Ministers of our country.

Those who have redefined our independence to be dependant on foreign powers have grabbed the highest political posts in our Country. And, those who should have opposed this mischief have allied with them in the style of safeguarding secularity! Those who should have remained unfazed on the issue of political economy of capitalism versus socialism, have, only in order to remain in close proximity to power, been parading new ideas of political philosophy of

secularism versus communalism!
All the traitors!

Time has taken a turn towards the worse. Our brilliant boys have been leaving our Country in search of better living avenues in foreign lands.

In such a situation, when Baji Raut comes to mind, if every iota of patriotism is not extinguished, how can one suppress his agony?

Before parting, I would like you to know the following three aspects of Baji, which the history has not yet noted. They are:

(a) He is the youngest martyr of India in the in the struggle for her freedom.

(b) History did not create him. He created history. And,

(c) It is he, for whom alone the India we see now has been able to take this form.

Let me elaborate.

(a) Born in 1925, he was killed on October 10, 1938. (Who's Who of Indian Martyrs, compiled and published by Government of India, Vol.2, p.271) He was 13 then. No Indian patriot has sacrificed life at more a tender age in the way Baji did. I have searched the Who's Who of Indian Martyrs in its entirety and found none to compare with Baji. Hence he is the youngest martyr of India of his genre. The world should be made aware of this unique position.

(b) Many martyrs have been made by history. The two villagers of Bhuban who succumbed to firing

by police as noted above were martyrs created by history. There are many such instances. But Baji was different. He obstructed the royal troops to protect the Prajamandal leader. He could have saved his life by complying with the orders of the troop. But he bravely refused to heed to them, even though he knew that the bloody bruits were capable of killing him. He stood loyal to his people till he breathed his last and although injured beyond endurance, he never forgot to make people aware of the arrival of police so that they could hide their leader in a safer place. He dared death to defeat the evil design of the tyrant king. Therefore, he was a martyr whom history did not make but who made history.

(c) All of us know that there were 618 Princely States in India when we gained our independence. All of us know that the British Crown had restored sovereignty in all of them at the time we got our freedom. But none of us acknowledge that Baji Raut was the basic factor behind merger of all those States with the new independent India. Had he not been born, the India of now might never have taken this geographical form.

His heroic sacrifice inspired all the people of Princely States who, being highlanders, once provoked, were beyond control of the kings. The tyranny of the king of Dhenkanal having been convincingly exposed by Veer Baishnav Pattanayak and exposure of oppressions let loose in other Princely States having come to lime light by the Praja Mandal organizations of those States, the National Congress also formed a fact finding committee headed by

Harekrushna Mahtab in Orissa. This Committee was convinced that unless the Princely States are taken over, plight of the majority people of Orissa (because most of Orissa was under Princely rule) would not end. With independent patches of land having their own sovereign rulers at various parts of Orissa, and for that matter, of the country, shall also play havoc with administration when India becomes independent, the committee concluded.

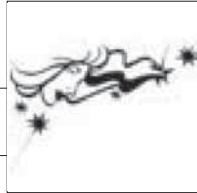
The Kings of Orissa met in a conference in July 1946 at Alipore and resolved to form a Feudal Union. It was clear that they shall not allow their people to be free from their rule.

In sharp reaction to this evil design of the kings, Veer Baishnav Pattanayak took the first militant steps against Shankar Pratap, the King of Dhenkanal. He transformed the passive Praja Mandal movement into an armed revolution. It is to be noted that people of Nilagiri where a brother of Shankar Pratap of Dhenkanal was also the king, heightened their militant attack on the Palace under leadership of the famous Marxist leader Bamamali Das, compelling the King to flee. In most of the Princely States of Orissa, militant attacks were made by Praja Mandal activists on the Kings and their cronies causing panicky in them. The kings felt that if they do not merge their States with India, the Praja Mandal activists will eliminate them, their protector, the British, having left the Country. Hence under that extraordinary situation, they agreed to surrender their kingship and to merge their respective State with independent India. Kings of

Dhenkanal and Nilagiri were the first persons to agree. On watching this development, Mahtab prevailed upon Sardar Patel to come to Orissa finalize merger terms. He came along with V.P.Menon, the then Secretary in the Department of States to Cuttack on December 13 and on the next day held a detail discussion with the Kings. Finalization of the terms and conditions of merger took a fortnight and on January 01, 1948 all the Princely States except Mayurbhanj merged in Orissa. The later volunteered to merge on January 1st in the following year. The Orissa experience prompted all the Kings in all other provinces to merge their respective States with Independent India to escape violent uprising of their people. And thus, with the merger of all the 618 Feudal States, left as Sovereigns by the British, the modern India became able to take this new form.

If the people of Orissa had the English Media at their command, and had the historians been able to interpret events without fear, the martyrdom of Baji Raut could have been recognized as the main factor behind elimination of Kingdoms and creation of the new geographical shape of the modern India. The Peoples Movement in Dhenkanal being basically lunched and led by a Communist revolutionary was never to be given its due importance by post-independence intelligentsia. In consequence, Baji Raut has not yet been properly evaluated, even though he is mentioned in the Who's Who of Indian Martyrs, published by Government of India

Subhas Chandra Pattanayak
is an eminent journalist



Short Story

Tracks Left Behind

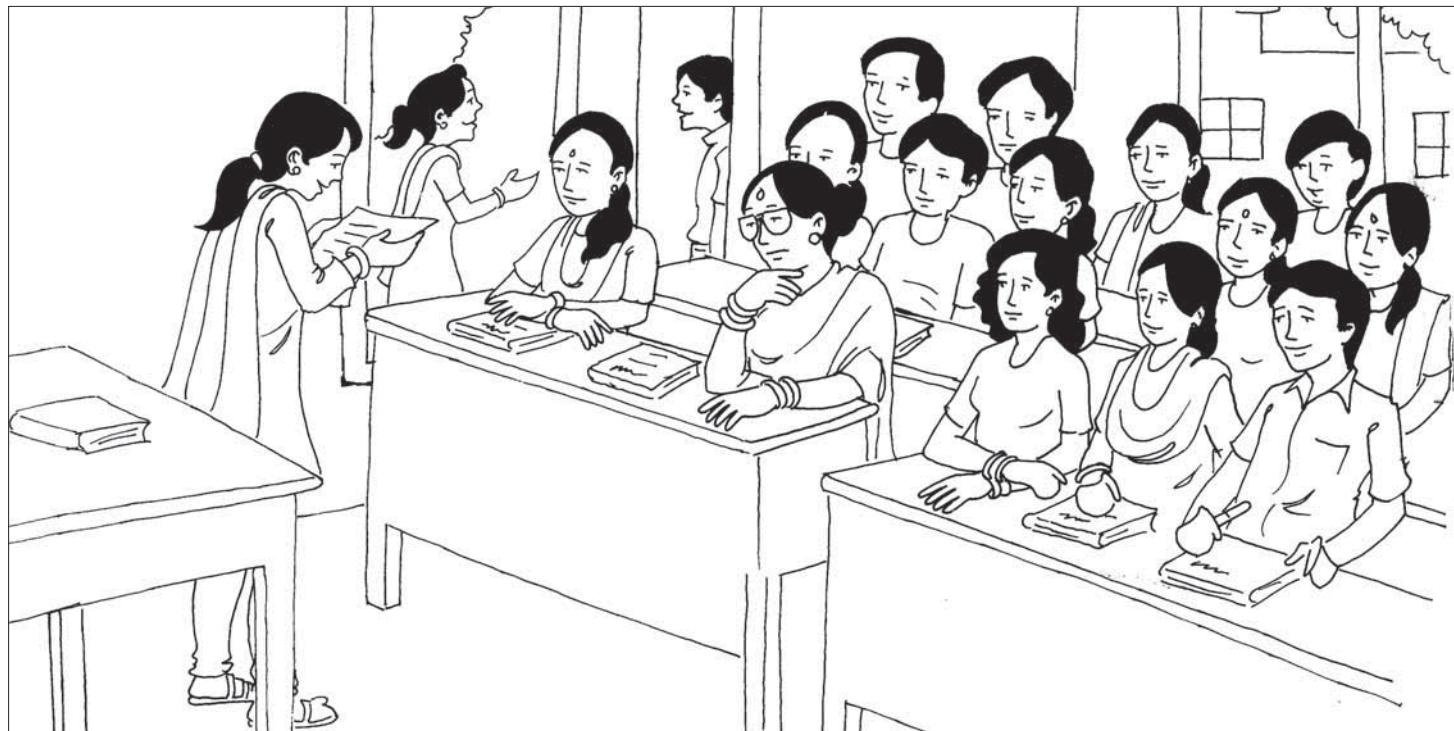
Surkhraj Kaur

Chaitanya jumped out of bed and hurriedly switched off the alarm on the mobile phone that her father had gifted her. It was his present to her for getting through one of the most prestigious colleges in the country. Running out of the house she picked up a toast and tried not to let her bag fall off her shoulder. Reaching the bus stop she couldn't but feel annoyed with herself for having missed the university special bus for the third time in a row. She now had to face the difficult task of travelling with the amm janta. Somehow managing to get onto the 540 she pushed her way

to the back and stood next to the exit door. That was her favorite place in a bus; she could stand there for hours and watch the hoards of men and women squeeze into the bus while giving her looks of disgust for blocking their way.

While this day was like any other, Chaitanya knew it was going to be slightly nerve racking. She had made the mistake of saying something contrary to what the professor had stated in class two days ago and this was seen as 'back talking' to her professor who promptly suggested that Chaitanya produce an

assignment on her views. The professor added saying "Ms. Chaitanya will enlighten us all by reading the assignment out loud in lecture hall B, two days from now". This was no ordinary task and her professor was merciless. Her professor's round face and large optical lenses kept flitting in Chaitanya's mind, the thought of being ridiculed in front of her friends and class mates made her stomach churn. Finally her stop arrived and she jumped out of the bus with her bag darting towards her college gate. She had made it on time! A sigh of relief and then more nervousness worrying about the response she



Short Story

would get from her audience. She reassured her self that her group of friends would cheer her even if what she said didn't make any sense. She was extremely thankful to have such friends, who knew that she always spoke out of line and didn't agree with most of what was taught to them as history.

The sign read 'Hall B', Chaitanya clasped the sheets of paper in her hand tightly, took a deep breath and entered the hall smiling warmly at everyone. Her professor and classmates were already in their seats and ready for 'fun time'! The room had huge desks and benches, the walls had ceiling high windows and the room was well lit. It was not one of those dingy dark rooms.

The professor nodded at Chaitanya to proceed with reading out from the pages. Chaitanya smiled and began "my dear friends and respected teacher, today I am going to present to you my views on British rule in India and it's over romanticized contribution to the modernization of our country". The hall resonated with echoing claps from the last row which was filled by Chaitanya's friends. The professor immediately turned around and shouted in a stern voice, "Could we please have silence

in the hall!" There was complete silence in a matter of seconds. Chaitanya looked at the professor nervously and continued. "I was urged to write on this topic when my views on British rule in India were seen as baseless and unnecessary. Even so, at different points in our lives we will have to justify our words and actions and I welcome this opportunity to be heard with such enthusiasm. I thank you all for coming today". She relaxed her pose and turned to read from the pages in her hands.

Chaitanya began talking about how modern inventions in Europe were brought to India with a motive. The motive was not to empower India with the latest technology or to make it modern, but to suppress the masses of people and use them against each other. She took up the example of the introduction of the railway system and said "the British used the railways to transport goods and their armies across the country; we would be naive to think that they wanted Indians to travel in comfort and style (she smiled)".

After forming a few parallels with modern day Capitalism and British Imperialism Chaitanya looked towards her friends and said "What kind of modernity are we living in

anyway, this system diverts me from thinking for myself every single day, it makes me want to stop thinking and only take care of my own interests, it makes me want to not care for anyone or anything else, it isolates me from others. Why then should I accept that it was a good thing that the British came and looted and plundered my land but left behind a chu-chu train!"

Chaitanya felt emotionally charged and vulnerable, but she also felt liberated. She concluded her paper "Thank you all for your patience, it is wonderful to be heard and I would like to thank professor Bina for making it possible for me to give voice to my views. Views are an important part of Indian society. Teachers are gifts never to be underestimated and this fact was not learnt by me because we were once colonized." Chaitanya looked at her professor and smiled genuinely, her professor's previously angry face had turned calm and she smiled back with awe in her eyes. For the first time in 6 months Chaitanya was no longer afraid of her professor's words or glasses. She was happy because she felt young and alive fighting for her right to be a conscious thinking person.

Surkhraj is a working professional

Wendy's Children Versus Wendy's Stepchildren (Contd. from 15)

components of Vedas, caste system and the scheme of four stages of life. These are positions compatible with Hindutva. Balu has a charismatic personality, a short compact man with a beard, he exudes enormous personal power. His faith in himself is most frightening, and his casual dismissal of dissenters is part of this self-confidence. To be fair to him,

he is an informal and friendly man with a keen sense of humour. It is not a question of personal integrity or personality of Wendy or her enemies that is at stake. The stake is nothing less than the choice of human vision – Do you want a modern life which is compatible with Hinduism or you want to live an artificial Hindu life concocted out of

medieval Christian theology, Brahmanical orthodoxy and a reactionary version of Hinduism. Thanks to Wendy, her children and stepchildren, we are forced to confront crucial choices.

Prof K Raghavendra Rao, is a reputed political scientist and commentator.



Events

Resonances

National Archives of India to Organise Exhibition-1857

The National Archives of India is organizing an exhibition entitled 1857, based on public records, and private papers available among the record holdings. The attempt is to focus on key areas which sparked off the Uprising till it was suppressed in 1858.

To facilitate the comprehension of the events, the exhibits have been divided into four separate segments, each linked to the other and carrying a specific theme. The first Section entitled Spark attempts to highlight the discontent among soldiers as well as residents of Hindustan against the Company's rule in India. Section II entitled Fire focuses on the beginning of the Uprising

including reaction of the British authorities through Telegrams and letters exchanged among the Officers of the East India Company on the mutinous developments. The Third Section titled Blaze contains documents highlighting the measures taken by the British to quell the Mutineers through various means including offer of rewards leading to the arrest of Mutineers, capture of the Fort of Jhansi, Court Martial of 85 troopers of the Bengal Light Cavalry, etc. The final Segment entitled Luminaries focuses on the heroes of the Uprising viz, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Nana Saheb, Kunwar Singh, etc.

The thematic Collection of archival records and photographs related

to the developments of the Revolt are aimed at helping the researchers and students to understand in a better way, how the Revolt affected the lives of the people away from the epicenter of the rebellion in North India to the length and breadth of the country. It is hoped that historical researchers would seek new domains and enrich their understanding of the phenomenon of the Sub continent.

The Exhibition will be inaugurated by Shri Jawhar Sircar, Secretary Culture, Government of India at the India International Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi on 2 July 2010 and will remain open for public viewing till 8th July 2010.

Indian Express: Voice of Dilli

Antara Das
Sun, Aug 08 2010, 23:16 hrs

Mahmood Farooqui's book shows how ordinary residents of Delhi lived out the 1857 uprising

1857 was an unsettling time to be in Delhi. Life, as Dilliwallas lived it, was changing fast. Gambling had been made illegal, as was the sale of opium. You couldn't play drums during Muharram and kite and pigeon flying was banned. Lead was contraband and one could be detained

if caught travelling with it. These arresting vignettes and much more, are part of Besieged: Voices From Delhi 1857 (Penguin India, Rs 699), a work of compilation and translation by Mahmood Farooqui. The book is based on The Mutiny Papers, a collection of documents mainly dealing with Delhi in 1857 stored at the National Archives of India.

"The ordinary people of Delhi were going through a momentous period in history" says Farooqui. "But the troubles and ordeals they faced

have been appropriated in writing a national narrative, in legitimising the state," he says. "They might not have wanted that narrative," he adds. Farooqui had embarked on the project of researching the papers at the insistence of writer William Dalrymple.

"The papers had been accessed earlier by historians but not looked at with the respect they deserve," he says. A year of sifting and translating the archival documents written in shikastah (cursive) Urdu, and untold stories

began to emerge from the depths of ordinary petitions, notifications and orders. So we learn that residents felt harassed as meat and vegetables got scarce, paan became too expensive and toilet cleaners stopped doing their work. A certain Mir Akbar Ali petitions the Mughal authorities, complaining against soldiers billeted in a neighbouring house who “gamble, abuse and ogle at the women”.

Soldiers, too, were not always a happy lot. A petition from a particular regiment shows the troops complain that they were not getting their quota of sugar syrup (sheerini) that other regiments seem to be getting.

Women, too, enjoyed a surprising amount of freedom: a certain Bilsa is summoned by the court and asked whether she prefers her first husband or the second one she has recently married.

The archival documentation was mainly a colonial enterprise, done with the intention of gathering supporting evidence for the prosecution of Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. That does not mean that one should develop a sense of gratitude, says Farooqui, for when the British wrote our history, it was “a subordinate history, a bastardised, inferior version of what was ideal”. “On June 23,

1857, Indian soldiers in Delhi were observing the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Plassey,” he says. “A sense of history is something that was not necessarily given to us by the British,” he adds.

Farooqui, credited with reviving dastangoi, the art of Urdu storytelling, is also interested in looking at the cultural repercussions of 1857. In fact, the setback that performance art suffered in particular might be the next subject he takes on. “I would like to probe where characters like the bhaand (stand-up comics), naqqal (mimics), the art of tableaux and spectacles all disappeared,” he signs off.

David Cameron's Ancestors Helped Suppress Indian mutiny

One of David Cameron's ancestors helped suppress the Indian Mutiny, it has emerged.

By Heidi Blake, 01 Aug 2010

Just days after the Prime Minister won praise for his first visit to the subcontinent, it was disclosed that Mr Cameron's great-great-grandfather was a British cavalryman who fought the Indians more than 150 years ago.

William Low left behind graphic accounts of how he slew rebels with his sabre and participated in a mass hanging of civilians during the two-year mutiny against British rule, which began in 1857.

The cavalryman also told how he came close to losing a hand and an ear in combat during the uprising, which is known in India as the first war of independence.

Mr Cameron has previously said that his ancestors were involved in “empire building” in India.

Had the full story of his great-great-grandfather's involvement in suppressing the mutiny become public before Mr Cameron's recent trip to the subcontinent, it could have caused diplomatic embarrassment.

The Prime Minister's family tree was traced by the genealogist Nick Barratt, who worked on the BBC programme Who Do You Think You Are?

William Low was the grandfather of Sir William Mount, who married Elizabeth Llewellyn in 1929. The couple became Mr Cameron's maternal grandparents.

In letters unearthed in the British Library by the Sunday Times, Low described how he mercilessly “cut down” the Indian rebels.

In one clash, his hand was cut to the bone and his ear was sliced open.

After another battle, the cavalryman wrote to his father, General Sir John Low: “The rebel infantry stood, but almost all their cavalry bolted. The result was that they were thoroughly beaten and dispersed, that upwards of 100 dead bodies were left on the field, while we lost but nine killed and wounded, two horses killed and seven wounded.

“Completely dispirited, the rebels then took themselves to their city, but the infantry were now well up and the place was, after considerable resistance, carried at the point of the bayonet, and the cavalry outside cutting up numbers of who endeavoured to escape. All the great men were captured and hung [sic].”

Downing Street declined to comment on Mr Cameron's ancestry.

Soon, a website on A to Z of 1857 revolt

Indian Express
Pranav Kulkarni
Sat Jul 31 2010,

Pune : The revolt of 1857, a perfect and the only display of a strong unity among Hindus and Muslims, Marathas and North Indians, will now grab exclusive space on the web world. City-based historians Ninad Bedekar, Dhananjay Kulkarni and Nitin Shastri have come together to launch the first-ever indigenous website dedicated entirely to history, documentation and after effects of the revolt of 1857.

“Such was the impact of the revolt, that even till the second world war or as recent as India’s freedom in

1947, the British never forgot its implications. Their military strategies, ruling tactics were focused on avoiding eruption of such a movement again. To prevent Indians from deriving inspiration from it, the British rulers in India and England kept on presenting their interpretation of the revolt which was biased towards the British and far from reality,” said historian Ninad Bedekar.

Sawarkar’s book 1857 Che Swatantra Samar , meaning the freedom fight of 1857, was banned from being published by the then government. “Today, a Google search on 1857 yields two lakh web pages which are interpretations of how

western historians and rulers view the revolt. There are evidences that villagers from north, eastern and western India were involved in the fight against the brutality of the rulers. This website is reality without bias,” said Dhananjay Kulkarni of Pune Academy for Advanced Studies (PAAS), the organisation that also created a 40-minute documentary on the revolt in 2007, the 150th anniversary year of the revolt.

Scheduled to be functional within six months, the work for the website has been going on for last two years. The website is expected to cross 7,000 pages. “Sixty per cent work is over. We want to reach out to youngsters,” added Shastri.

The Unsung Freedom Fighters

Faizan Ahmad, TNN,
Aug 15, 2010, TOI

PATNA: Ask anybody who Bhagat Singh was or, for that matter, Ashfaqullah Khan. The reply will be that they were freedom fighters who fought the British and were hanged for their rebellion. But nobody can say who was Ghasita Khalifa or Nandu Lal.

They were also freedom fighters who fought the British and were hanged. But there is absolutely no mention of them in history books. These unsung freedom fighters receive no recognition though they sacrificed their lives for the Independence of their motherland.

Now quite a few people know who Peer Ali Khan was. This martyr is now known a little more thanks to the state government’s decision to develop a children’s park opposite the residence of the Patna DM and name it after Khan who had been hanged at the same place in 1857.

But several other freedom fighters, who had been hanged or sent for rigorous imprisonment to Kala Pani, Andamans, still remain unknown. For, history books do not include their names and the historians never made an attempt to dig out their sacrifices.

On July 7, 1857 as many as 30 rebels, including Peer Ali Khan, had

been summarily tried in presence of then Patna commissioner William Tayler and 14 of them were handed out capital punishment.

Apart from Khan, others who were hanged to death were Ghasita Khalifa, Ghulam Abbas, Nandu Lal alias Sipahi, Jumman, Maduwa, Kajil Khan, Ramzani, Peer Baksh, Peer Ali, Wahid Ali, Ghulam Ali, Mahmood Akbar and Asrar Ali Khan. Hardly anyone has ever heard these names.

As many as 13 others were awarded rigorous imprisonment with stakes and chains at that trial. They were Habibullah, Faiyaz Ali, Mirza Agha Mughal, Rajab Ali, Asghar Ali Beg,

Deen Mahmood, Shiv Dayal, Bhanju, Jagdhar Singh, Sadat Ali, Bandhu, Munnu and Bihari. Nathu Chokar was ordered to be flogged and Peer Bakhsh Dafali and Sheikh Fakir were given life term.

The second trial was held on July 13, 1857 when Ghasita Doman, Kallu Khan and Paigambar Bakhsh were hanged and Ashraf Ali sentenced to 14 years of jail. At third trial on August 8, 1857 two more: Ausaf Husain and Chhedi Gwala were hanged and Sheikha Nabi Bakhsh, Rahmat Ali and Dilawar were awarded life imprisonment while Khwaja Amir Jan got 14 years jail term.

The list of these freedom fighters have been printed in a book recently

published by the state archives department.

“It’s really very sad that these and many other people, who took active part in the freedom struggle and even sacrificed their lives, were forgotten,” said historian and Khuda Bakhsh Library director Imtiaz Ahmad. “There are numerous evidence to show that in the decades before the Uprising of 1857, some eminent persons from Patna were active in mobilizing opinion and organizing support against the British,” he said.

Ahmadullah (1808-1881) was one such person who belonged to the family of the Ulema (clerics) of Sadiqpur in Patna. He was arrested

by Tayler on charges of conspiracy to wage war against the Empire and was ferried to Andaman Islands and his properties were confiscated.

Historian Qeyamuddin Ahmad wrote that all properties of Ahmadullah and others who were convicted or proclaimed as rebels were confiscated and their residential houses demolished. “The confiscated properties were sold at throwaway prices and out of the sale proceeds, totalling Rs 1,21,948, a Wahabi Fund was formed. Part of it was spent on the construction of a municipal market and on the expansion of the Patna College building,” the historian wrote.

Kattabomman's conversation with Jackson Thurai

Veerapandiya Kattabomman was crowned as the 47th king of Panchalankurichi in 1790. Mr Alan, a British representative, demanded that Kattabomman must pay six years of tax arrears but the king refused to acknowledge that the British had any claim on his lands. Kattabomman was not frightened of the consequences of his refusal to pay tax. He continued to reject a meeting with Jackson, the Collector of the East India Company. Eventually on 10th September 1798, Kattabomman met with Jackson at the palace in Ramanathapuram to discuss their tax dispute. The king made a famously impassioned speech condemning the behaviour of British administrators. The meeting ended violently as Jackson ordered Kattabomman to be arrested. In a battle with the Deputy Commandant of the Company's forces, Kattabomman managed to escape. The Deputy Commandant, Clarke, was killed.

Here below is a translation of Kattabomman's famous conversation with Jackson Thurai.

“Royalties, tributes, tax, interest!

The skies shower and the earths bear; why do you want royalties?

Did you come to the fields, negotiate the mounds, do the watering?

Plant the paddy, pluck the weeds, carry our farmer's gruel?

Or did you grind turmeric and work for our young ladies playing there?

Or are you my uncle or brother-in-law? Shameless fool!

Why do you ask for royalties? How dare you ask for tax?

Our warrior forces will crush your heads into mere dust! Beware!

My moustache quivers, but my arrival as a guest prevents me!

For insulting me such, your head shall roll!”